

PB-243 696

RADIOACTIVITY STANDARDS DISTRIBUTION
PROGRAM, 1975

National Environmental Research Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

April 1975

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218079

EPA-680/4-75-002a
APRIL 1975

PB 243 696

Environmental Monitoring Series

**RADIOACTIVITY STANDARDS
DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM
1975**



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TECHNICAL REPORT DATA (Please read Instructions on the reverse before completing)		
1. REPORT NO. EPA-680/4-75-002a	2.	3. REPORT'S DISPOSITION NO. PB243696
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Radioactive Standards Distribution Program - 1975		5. REPORT DATE April 1975
		6. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION CODE
7. AUTHOR(S) Quality Assurance Branch Technical Support Laboratory		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NO.
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS National Environmental Research Center U.S. Environmental Protection Agency P. O. Box 15027 Las Vegas, Nevada 89114		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. 1HA327
		11. CONTRACT/GRANT NO.
12. SPONSORING AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS Office of Research and Development U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Washington, D.C. 20460		13. TYPE OF REPORT AND PERIOD COVERED Interim 1975
		14. SPONSORING AGENCY CODE
15. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		
16. ABSTRACT A program for the distribution of calibrated radioactive samples, as one function of EPA's quality assurance program for environmental radiation measurements, is described. Included is a discussion of the objectives of the distribution program and a description of the preparation, availability, and distribution of calibrated radioactive samples. Instructions and application forms are included for laboratories desiring to participate in the program. This document is not a research report. It is designed for use by personnel of laboratories participating or desiring to participate in the Radioactivity Standards Distribution Program which is a part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's quality assurance program.		
17. KEY WORDS AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS		
A. DESCRIPTORS quality assurance quality control radioactivity quantitative analysis calibrating standards	B. IDENTIFIERS/OPEN ENDED TERMS	C. COSATI Field/Group 07 05/14 04
18. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT Release unlimited NERC-LV, NTIS	19. SECURITY CLASS (This Report) Unclassified	21. NO. OF PAGES 19
	20. SECURITY CLASS (This page) Unclassified	22. PRICE 3.25

EPA-680/4-75-002a
April 1975

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by

Quality Assurance Branch
Technical Support Laboratory
National Environmental Research Center
Las Vegas, Nevada

ROAP Number 22ADB
Program Element 1HA327

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PREFACE

Quality assurance is an integral part of any viable environmental monitoring activity. The primary goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) quality assurance program are to improve and document the credibility of environmental measurements. To achieve these goals, quality assurance is needed in nearly all segments of monitoring activities and should cover personnel, methods selection, equipment, and data handling procedures.

Five major functions, each essential to an effective quality assurance effort, comprise EPA's quality assurance program.

- Promulgation of standardized methods of measurement
- Distribution of standard reference materials
- Issuance of guidelines and procedures
- Training and technical assistance
- Evaluation and certification of monitoring activities

This manual has been prepared to assist laboratories involved with environmental radiation measurements in developing and maintaining a quality control program and documenting the precision and accuracy of their data. All EPA monitoring programs are requested to make use of this document in planning their own radiation measurements and in assisting the States in carrying out radiation monitoring activities.

Comments concerning the utility of this document, along with any suggestions for possible changes and revisions, are welcomed. Questions on matters related to quality assurance of environmental measurements in various fields should be directed to the following person(s):

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Periodically, manuals and documents will be issued which provide guidelines to be followed in all phases of monitoring activities. Use of these guidelines throughout the Agency will enable a uniform approach to be established within EPA which ultimately can be implemented at the State level. This should permit a significant improvement in the validity and reliability of environmental data collected throughout the Nation.

The implementation of a total and meaningful national environmental quality assurance effort cannot succeed without the full support of all monitoring programs. Your cooperation is appreciated.

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PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Environmental measurements are made daily by many different Federal, State, local and private agencies. The data from these measurements are used for a wide variety of purposes including assessment of health effects, the establishment of standards and guides, and for enforcement activities. It is therefore imperative that the precision and accuracy of the data be assured in order that policy decisions concerning environmental quality be based on valid and comparable data.

The quality assurance program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is designed to encourage the development and implementation of quality control procedures at all levels of sample collection, analysis, data handling, and reporting. Quality control responsibilities, in the radiation area, have been assigned to the Quality Assurance Branch at the EPA's National Environmental Research Center-Las Vegas. This branch, as an integral part of its overall quality assurance effort, prepares and distributes a variety of calibrated low-level radioactive samples for use in the laboratories of Federal, State, and local agencies.

The major objective of this program is to encourage the development of intralaboratory and interlaboratory quality control procedures and thus insure that environmental radiation data are valid. Providing accurately calibrated samples assists laboratories in calibrating new instruments, implementing and maintaining routine instrument calibration programs, evaluating analytical procedures, and developing and revising data processing programs.

The following pages briefly describe standard preparation procedures, list the radionuclides available, and indicate how a laboratory may request standards.

If your laboratory does not currently make use of the services provided by the Quality Assurance Branch at the NERC-LV, it is encouraged to do so.

PREPARATION AND CALIBRATION OF SAMPLES

The radionuclides used in preparing calibrated samples are obtained from the National Bureau of Standards, the Laboratoire de Metrologie des Rayonnements Ionisants (France), or from reliable commercial sources. The uncertainty in the known activity of individual sources ranges from 0.5% to 5%. Activity of radionuclide impurities, excluding daughters, is documented and typically is less than 1% of the activity of the principal radionuclide.

Upon receipt, a radionuclide is checked for its activity and for the presence of radioactive contaminants. The sample is then diluted to the desired activity level (10,000-50,000 dpm/gm) with a carrier of the same chemical composition and concentration as used by the supplier. In certain cases the addition of a stabilizer is required. The accuracy of the dilution is carefully checked and the solution flame sealed in 5-ml ampuls.

Accompanying each calibrated sample is a certificate (Figure 1) listing pertinent information concerning the sample and its calibration including an estimate of the errors associated with the value of the activity. For gamma emitters, a net plot (Figure 2) of the pulse height spectrum is also included.

To further assure the precision and accuracy of the calibrated samples, the Quality Assurance Branch participates in on-going inter-comparison studies with the National Bureau of Standards. These studies involve the measurement of unknown samples supplied by the NBS, and the measurement by NBS of EPA-prepared samples.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER LAS VEGAS
QUALITY ASSURANCE BRANCH

Calibration Certificate

Description	Principal radionuclide		Half-life	
	Nominal activity		curies	
	Nominal volume		ml or ampoule/bottle number	
Supplied to		Request		

Measurement Activity of principal radionuclide

Activity per gram of this solution

	curies	of	
		at 0400 hours PS ¹⁰ or	

Activity of daughter radionuclide

The principal activity was accompanied at the quoted time by

	curies	per gram
of the daughter nuclide		

TOTAL MASS OF THIS SOLUTION

TOTAL PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY PER
GRAM AT THE QUOTED TIME

grams		curies
----------------------------	----------------------	-----------------------------

Figure 1. Calibration Certificate

Method of measurement

Useful Life This radionuclide has decayed through half lives since it was obtained by NERC-LV

We recommend that this solution should not be used after

Purity

The manufacturer states that activities other than that of the principal nuclide and of its daughter nuclides, if any, were estimated/known to be

(1)	less than % of the principal activity
	equal to % of the principal activity
(2)	less than % of the principal activity
	equal to % of the principal activity
(3)	less than % of the principal activity
	equal to % of the principal activity

The activity of impurity (1) is not (2) is not (3) is not included in the quoted figures of the principal activity

It is estimated that we have added the following impurities

(1)	less than	curies/gram
(2)	less than	curies/gram
(3)	less than	curies/gram

Figure 1 (continued). Calibration Certificate

Random Errors

The repeatability of this standardization (dilutions, source preparations, counting statistics, mass determinations, etc.) was such that the certified value of the radioactive concentration of the principle activity had a standard error (σ) not greater than

$\pm$ % (The 99.7% confidence limits are given by $\pm 3\sigma$)

The total systematic error (sum of estimated maximum residual systematic errors due to dispensing, counting losses, counting corrections, known uncertainty of standard) of the certified radioactive concentrations of the principle activity has been estimated not to

exceed $+$ % (δ) or $-$ % (δ')

The overall limits of error calculated on the basis of $\pm(3\sigma + \delta)$ or $\pm(3\sigma + \delta')$ are

$+$ % or $-$ % of the quoted radioactive concentration

The effective standard deviation is defined as 1/6th of the range between the overall limits

$\pm(3\sigma + \delta)$ and $\pm(3\sigma + \delta')$ and is therefore %

Decay Schemes This standardization is based on the following assumptions of the principle nuclide, its daughter nuclides and impurities (no allowance for error in these assumptions or the assumption of quoted half-life have been included in the statement of accuracy above)

Chemical
Composition
of Solution

Carrier content per gram of solution

Other components

Preservative

Remarks

Date Certificate Prepared

Approval Signature

Figure 1 (continued). Calibration Certificate

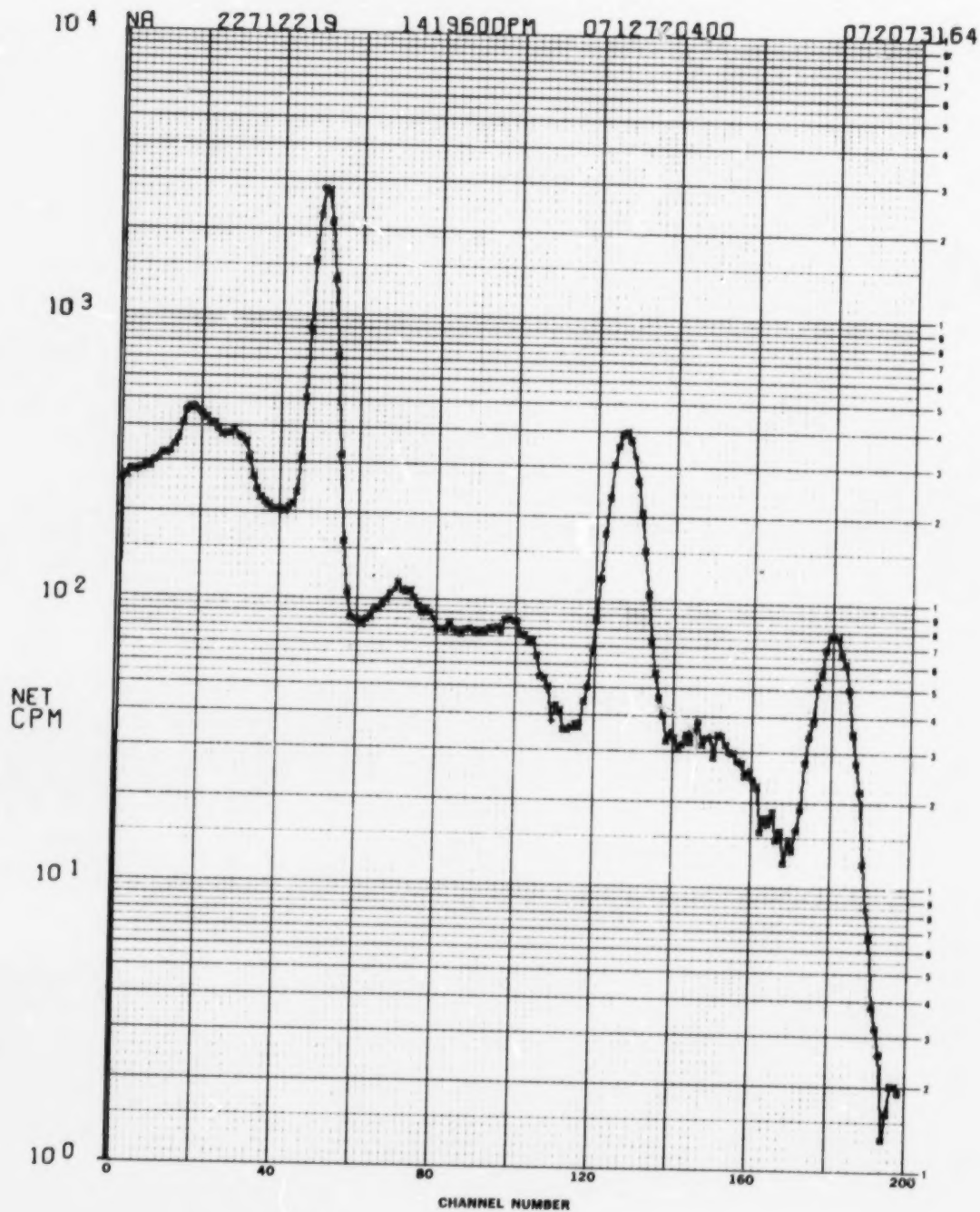


Figure 2. Net Pulse Height Spectrum of Sodium-22 Measured with 4-inch x 4-inch NaI(Tl) Crystal

AVAILABILITY OF CALIBRATED SAMPLES

The current inventory of calibrated samples consists of some forty different radionuclides. The table below lists the available radionuclides along with a schedule of their delivery dates. Radionuclides scheduled for delivery during a particular month will be prepared once during this year. They will be available after this month until the inventory is depleted, or until their decay negates the calibration.

CALIBRATED SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

<u>Isotope</u>	<u>Type Emission</u>	<u>Half-Life*</u>	<u>Delivery</u>
^3H	β^-	12.26 years	Stock
^7Be	γ	53.6 days	Feb
^{14}C	β^-	5730 years	Stock
^{22}Na	β^+, γ	2.62 years	Stock
^{46}Sc	β^-, γ	83.9 days	Oct, Jan
^{51}Cr	γ	27.8 days	Feb
^{54}Mn	γ	303 days	Stock
^{56}Co	β^+, γ	77.3 days	May
^{57}Co	γ	270 days	Stock
^{50}Co	β^+, γ	71.3 days	Apr
^{59}Fe	β^-, γ	45.6 days	Apr
^{60}Co	β^-, γ	5.26 years	Stock
^{65}Zn	β^+, γ	245 days	Stock
^{75}Se	γ	120.4 days	Stock
^{85}Kr	β^-, γ	10.8 years	May
^{85}Sr	γ	64 days	Stock

* Lederer, C., et al., *Table of Isotopes*, sixth edition, John Wiley and Sons, New York 1967

CALIBRATED SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION SCHEDULE (continued)

Isotope	Type Emission	Half-Life*	Delivery
⁸⁸ Y	β^+, γ	108 days	Jan
⁸⁹ Sr	β^-	52 days	Stock
⁹⁰ Sr	β^-	27.7 years	Stock
⁹⁵ Zr- ⁹⁵ Nb	β^-, γ	65 days	Jun, Dec
¹⁰³ Ru	β^-, γ	39 days	Mar, Nov
¹⁰⁶ Ru	β^-, γ	368 days	Stock
¹⁰⁹ Cd	γ	453 days	Stock
^{110m} Ag	β^-, γ	255 days	Stock
¹²⁴ Sb	β^-, γ	60.4 days	Mar, Oct
¹²⁵ Sb	β^-, γ	2.71 years	Stock
¹³¹ I	β^-, γ	8.06 days	Monthly
¹³³ Ba	γ	7.2 years	Stock
¹³⁴ Cs	β^-, γ	2.04 years	Stock
¹³⁷ Cs	β^-, γ	30 years	Stock
¹³⁹ Ce	γ	140 days	Feb
¹⁴⁰ Ba	β^-, γ	12.8 days	Within 4 months
¹⁴¹ Ce	β^-, γ	32.5 days	Mar
¹⁴⁴ Ce	β^-, γ	284 days	Stock
¹⁹⁵ Au	γ	183 days	Stock
²⁰³ Hg	β^-, γ	46.9 days	Sep
²²⁶ Ra [†]	α, γ	1602 years	Stock
²³⁰ Th ^{††}	α	8×10^4 years	Jul
²³² Th [†]	α	1.4×10^{10} years	Stock
²³⁸ U [†]	α	4.5×10^9 years	Stock
²³⁹ Pu ^{†††}	α	2.4×10^4 years	Stock
²⁴¹ Am ^{††}	α, γ	433 years**	Stock

* See footnote on page 8

** NBS Certificate Standard Reference Material 4904-D. α -part standard americium-241, April 1970

† Possible State license required

†† Byproducts license required

††† Special nuclear material license required

PARTICIPATION IN CALIBRATED SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

Any Federal, State, local or private laboratory involved in, or concerned with, environmental radiation monitoring and surveillance may participate in the calibrated sample distribution program. To request samples, complete one of the request forms included in this publication and return it to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Environmental Research Center
Quality Assurance Branch (TSQ)
P.O. Box 15027
Las Vegas, NV 89114

All requests for calibrated samples should be submitted at least three weeks in advance in order to insure delivery on the date required. Should additional forms be required, they may be requested from the same address.

RADIONUCLIDE REQUEST FORM

TO: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Environmental Research Center
Quality Assurance Branch (TSQ)
P.O. Box 15027
Las Vegas, NV 89114

Please ship the calibrated samples listed below to:

Contact Person _____
Title _____
Laboratory _____
Address _____
Telephone _____

AEC License _____
and/or Type(s) _____
State License Number(s) _____

NOTE: If either byproducts (in quantities greater than exempt quantities) or special nuclear materials are requested, a copy of the AEC license(s) should accompany the first request.

Radionuclide Samples Desired:

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

I certify that the calibrated sample(s) requested are to be used only in this laboratory by qualified personnel for the purpose of developing or checking analytical procedures and/or for the calibration of instrumentation.

I further certify that I am authorized to receive the above listed radionuclides under the license number(s) listed above or that this laboratory is exempt from licensing regulations.

Date _____ Signature _____
Title _____

RADIONUCLIDE REQUEST FORM

TO: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
National Environmental Research Center
Quality Assurance Branch (TSQ)
P.O. Box 15027
Las Vegas, NV 89114

Please ship the calibrated samples listed below to:

Contact Person _____
Title _____
Laboratory _____
Address _____
Telephone _____

AEC License _____
and/or Type(s) _____
State License Number(s) _____

NOTE: If either byproducts (in quantities greater than exempt quantities) or special nuclear materials are requested, a copy of the AEC license(s) should accompany the first request.

Radionuclide Samples Desired:

I certify that the calibrated sample(s) requested are to be used only in this laboratory by qualified personnel for the purpose of developing or checking analytical procedures and/or for the calibration of instrumentation.

I further certify that I am authorized to receive the above listed radionuclides under the license number(s) listed above or that this laboratory is exempt from licensing regulations.

Date _____ Signature _____
Title _____